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Chinese Labour

(IN THE TRANSVAAL)

BEING A STUDY OF
ITS MORAL, ECONOMIC, AND IMPERIAL
ASPECTS

BY

C. KINLOCH COOKE

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THE BEST PRESENT TO GIVE ANY OVER-SEA FRIEND IS AN ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

CHINESE LABOUR

IN THE TRANSVAAL

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INTRODUCTORY.

A Party Move.

IF a General Election were to take place within the next few weeks, there is little doubt that Chinese labour would occupy a prominent place in the Opposition programme. For some time things have been tending in this direction. Neither the Education nor the Fiscal questions have produced exactly the effect upon the labour mind that the Opposition wire-pullers had anticipated. The middle classes have, it is said, gone over stock and barrel at the bidding of the Nonconformist Conscience, and retaliation and preference have divided the aristocracy of the mercantile community, but a cry which may be relied on to secure the vote of the working-man has been badly needed.

At first the Radical chiefs hesitated to listen to the voice of the tempter. Possibly it was thought rather dangerous to depart from the accepted policy that as far as possible the Transvaal should be regarded in the light of a self-governing colony, a policy, be it remembered, accepted by both parties of the State. Or it may be that the prospect of returning to office, pledged to administer the new colonies with money drawn from the pockets of the British taxpayers did not appear sufficiently alluring. But whatever the reason, no political action was taken until the passing of the Transvaal Labour Importation Ordinance. Meanwhile the labour leaders did not let the grass grow under their feet; and when in time the order came, they had ready an organisation which materially assisted the Progressives at the recent County Council elections. Now the ball is rolling along and the Opposition, acting as one harmonious whole, is bent on playing a hard and

fast game, hoping thereby to bring about the downfall of the Government.

It is not a very edifying spectacle, this blending of imperial and party interests to gain an end which has but little connection with the question at stake. And it is, I think, the first time tactics of this kind have been employed in this country for so selfish a reason. Moreover, to confuse the issues on which the life and death of a colony depend, for party purposes is hardly in accordance with one's idea of what is English. And to do so in order to produce a false effect upon the mind of the working-man is travelling dangerously near the dividing line between honesty and dishonesty.

Restriction *v.* Exclusion.

One would suppose from the lamentable want of knowledge on the part of some orators, both within and without the precincts of the Houses of Parliament, that Chinese immigration was an entirely novel problem. Not at all. Many years ago it was a burning one in Australia and New Zealand. I remember it well, and was invited to express my opinion on the subject in a quarter commonly regarded by statesmen of both political parties as one of authority. Ever since I have taken a special interest in the subject, so perhaps I shall not be presuming if I offer a few observations on the present situation. At the outset, let me say that my opinion is the same now as then. I preach from the pulpit of restriction, not exclusion. I say exclusion, because the laws now in force both in Australia and New Zealand against the Chinese, whether he comes in as labourer or trader, cannot be regarded in any other light than laws of exclusion. Unrestricted immigration of Chinese is unsound economy, and neither in white nor black countries should it be sanctioned. On the other hand, Chinese indentured labour with proper safeguards is an asset which some of our sparsely populated colonies cannot afford to despise.

To give an example: With Chinese labour, surrounded by proper safeguards, the northern territory of South Australia might have been developed. And instead of talking, and talking, about a trans-continental railway, as the South Australians have been doing for the last twenty years or more, by the aid of indentured Chinese labour the line could long ago have been constructed. Then in place of the big gap, which in the event of a war might upset the plans of the commander-in-chief at a critical moment, Australia would to-day have possessed a railway system rendering the transport of troops and ammunition easy and expeditious at all points. It may be that the State Exchequer was never rich enough to take advantage of

Chinese indentured labour. But had the State developed in a greater degree the minerals in the north the position would have been different. Now the legislation on the statute-book makes any employment of Chinese labour impossible. I merely cite this as an instance of what might have been accomplished with the aid of Chinese labour.

Australia a White Man's Country.

But while I could have wished to see a loop-hole left in the Australian Immigration Acts, I am quite in sympathy with the feeling which brought about the restrictive policy. Australia is a white man's country—there are no blacks, therefore the unrestricted immigration of Chinese meant placing the Chinaman in competition with the white man. And seeing that the population of Australia at that date was only 3,000,000 while the population of China was 400,000,000 and China is not very far distant from the Australian continent, to have continued giving the Chinese the right of free entry would soon have meant the substitution of the yellow for the white man, and instead of founding a white Australia there would have been danger of founding a yellow Australia. The same result would have followed in New Zealand. But Australia and New Zealand are one thing and South Africa is another. South Africa is a black man's country, that is to say, the estimated native population South of the Zambesi is about 6,000,000 and the white population but 1,000,000. It needs no demonstration on my part then to show that the natural unskilled labourer of South Africa is the black man, and to the white man must be left the skilled labour.

South Africa a Black Man's Country.

If you gave the Chinese unrestricted entry into South Africa they would compete both with the unskilled black and the skilled white labourer, but if you restrict the immigration and make it an offence to employ a Chinaman on skilled work you only place him in competition with the native. In this way you do your best to induce the native to do an honest day's work for an honest day's pay, while at the same time increasing the openings for skilled white labour. Nor can this competition be used to lessen wages or increase the hours of work, for before the Chinaman leaves his native land the importer is required to enter into an agreement with him regarding rate of wages and hours of labour. And this agreement can be enforced in the Transvaal by the Chinaman himself, or if he prefer it, by an Inspector acting on his behalf. If the supply of available black labour in South Africa exceeded the demand you would not want

the Chinese labourer, and as you have to pay more for him than the black, naturally you would not seek him. Therefore it is clear that by placing restrictions on Chinese immigration you make competition with the white man impossible, and in no way injure the chances of the native. What then is impossible in Australia, where both skilled and unskilled labour is done by white men, is quite possible in South Africa, without in any way infringing the principles which actuated public feeling in Australia and New Zealand when passing the Immigration Acts. A great deal of capital is being made out of the protests from Mr. Deakin* and Mr. Seddon. These protests have no bearing whatever upon the rights and wrongs of indentured Chinese labour, but, as a working-class orator put it to me the other day in East London, they are prompted by the Labour Vote in the Commonwealth and in New Zealand.

With this brief introduction I approach the subject from its three sides, the moral, the economic and the imperial, subdividing these again as necessity requires.

THE MORAL SIDE.

Wives and Children.

I am constantly being reminded that it is an immoral proceeding to bring these Chinamen into the Transvaal. "Look at their vices and their peculiarities," say my critics. "Even the Archbishop is compelled to impress upon the Government the awful responsibility they are incurring by this importation." I listened very carefully to the Archbishop's speech in the House of Lords, but all I could gather was that he desired to see further provision made in the Ordinance for bringing over the wives of the indentured labourers. This request was immediately conceded, in fact, I think it had been anticipated by the Colonial Secretary, and the labourers will be allowed either to take their wives and families with them or to send for them later on, according as they themselves may decide.

When a white man goes out to the Transvaal he is generally content to wait a while before bringing out his wife and family, but I have never yet heard that by so doing he is committing an act of immorality. Lord Coleridge, emphasising this aspect of the question, intimated that the mine-owners would probably endeavour to obtain bachelors and not married men. I venture to remind Lord Coleridge that most skilled workers in the mines are bachelors. Does he infer that the bachelor

* Since the protest was made, Mr. Deakin's government have suffered defeat, and a purely Labour Ministry now holds office in the Australian Commonwealth.

Chinaman is necessarily a more immoral man than the bachelor Englishman? I am informed on an undoubted authority that he is not. Again, the natives do not bring their wives to the mines. Chinamen from Tientsin and elsewhere go in numbers to Manchuria to work in the mines, but they never take their women-kind with them. It is estimated that 80,000 labourers are carried annually by railway from the Tientsin district to Newchwang, while numbers travel on foot, and many thousands are conveyed by steamer or junk from Shantung. These men are content to visit their homes once a year, returning after a brief holiday to their work in the mines.

Unless the Chinaman be a social outlaw, or is free to become a trader, which, by the provisions of the Transvaal Ordinance he is not allowed to become, he has no wish to settle in a foreign country. All he desires is to make as much money as he can in the shortest possible time and to return home and spend it with his wife and family. Not an immoral ambition surely.

Official and Personal Opinion.

A gentleman who has lived all his life in Manchuria assures me that the allegations of the opponents of Chinese Labour as to the immoral tendencies of the coolies is nothing more than a series of libels. The Chinaman is quite as moral as the Englishman. Let us see what Sir Frank Swettenham,* who knows more of the Chinese immigrant than any other Englishman, has to say on this matter. Moreover, his experience has been gained in a British possession. In a letter to the *Times* he sums up his views thus:—

I have heard a good deal of Chinese vices from those who wanted an excuse for excluding Chinese labour from what are called white men's countries. Personally though I have lived for so many years amongst Chinese, I have seen amongst them no more evidence of vice than amongst other nationalities. . . . A certain proportion are smokers of opium, but those who smoke to excess are comparatively few, and I cannot remember having ever seen an intoxicated Chinese in the streets, or heard of a case of "drunk and disorderly" being brought before the courts. . . . Those who regard the Chinese as a people of peculiar views, not fit to live in the same country with Europeans, can easily ascertain whether the records of the police and other courts justify the charge. I say they do not. On the contrary, the Chinese are honest, hard-working, thrifty, and sober as people go.

Mr. Lyttelton, answering Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, dealt fully with the moral aspect of the Chinese Labour Question. Referring to the report issued by the Royal Commission appointed by the Canadian Government in 1902, a Commission decidedly hostile to the Chinese as a whole, he reminded the House of Commons that the Commissioners frankly admit

* Late Governor of the Straits Settlements.

that the Chinese have many noble virtues and characteristics, and compare favourably with other inhabitants in their observance of law and order. "There is little doubt," they say, "that to the frugality of their habits is to be attributed the absence of sensuality." Again, the Bishop of British Columbia writes that there was no proof that the men in any way whatever had debauched the community. "They lead quiet, sober and moral lives. There is not a particle of evidence of their importing new and detestable vices." Even Mr. Bryce, although an opponent of the Ordinance, declines to join "in the harsh judgment," to use his own words, which has been pronounced upon the Chinese, and Mr. Pickstone, the well-known authority on fruit farms in South Africa, adds the following testimony from long and intimate experience of the Chinese in California:

I speak [he says] as one who knows the Chinaman, as one who has worked with him, both as fellow employee and employer for some years, and I state at once that Mr. Gladstone was fully justified in stating that "it is not for his vices but for his virtues" that the Chinaman is feared, and you can take it from me, sir, that those sentimentalists who fancy the Chinaman is coming here to deprave the native and the white man of the country knows either little of the habits and customs of the Chinese or wilfully perverts the truth.

The Slavery Allegation.

Passing on to what I may perhaps term the passive side of the morality division, I come to the allegation that the Transvaal Labour Importation Ordinance, and the regulations which form part of that Ordinance, constitute between them "a system of slavery." I must confess that when first I heard this allegation preferred, I imagined the phrase was only used at haphazard, and that as soon as the facts became known it would not be repeated. But I was mistaken. Not only has the phrase been repeated over and over again, but, to judge from the speeches in the parliamentary debates, it is accepted by the leaders of the Opposition as accurately describing the position of affairs. Now to pass an ordinance instituting a system of slavery would be an immoral proceeding of the first degree. All Britons have a horror of slavery in any form, and in no British possession is it, or will it be, tolerated. Therefore, when it is seriously contended, as it is seriously contended, that Lord Milner and the Transvaal Council have committed an immoral act, and that his Majesty's Government have approved of the same immoral act, it behoves us to examine carefully the conditions under which the Chinese labourers are to be introduced into the Transvaal, and the conditions governing their employment at the mines.

What, then, are these conditions? For the sake of convenience I will enumerate them in tabular form.

Conditions of the Ordinance.

- (1.) The contract of service is to be advertised in the Chinese language by the Chinese Government throughout all the villages in which recruits are to be sought: and therefore months before the recruiter goes to these villages the subject will have been fully discussed by the inhabitants, and, as the Chinaman is a peculiarly acute man of business, it may be assumed that he will have well considered the provisions of the contract before making up his mind to accept the terms.
- (2.) The Chinese labourer will have a Protector in China, and every contract of service entered into by him will be signed in the presence of that Protector, who will represent, and be responsible directly to, the Transvaal Government.
- (3.) Before a contract is signed the official will explain to the labourer in his own language the provisions of the document, and in order that the Transvaal Government may know this has been done, the official will be required to certify that he has read over the contract to the labourer, who signed voluntarily, and without any undue pressure or misrepresentation. No uncertified contract can be registered, and no unregistered contract will be recognised.
- (4.) No contract will be allowed to be signed by any labourer until he has been examined by a qualified medical practitioner, and certified as being mentally and bodily sound.
- (5.) The labourer may, if he desires, without assigning any reason to his employer, break his contract, but if he do so he must refund to his employer a proportion of the expenses incurred in bringing him out, and he must also pay the cost of his repatriation. This concession is not usually to be found in any agreement with a white labourer.
- (6.) Every labourer is entitled to be accompanied by his wife and children under the age of ten years, or he may, after he has resided for a time in the colony, send for his wife and children. And all expenses in connection with the importation of a labourer's family must be paid by the importer.
- (7.) Labourers will be carried from the port of embarkation, Hong Kong, to the Port of Durban, in Natal, in a ship, the master of which holds a certificate from the

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appointed official, and this certificate will only be granted on similar conditions to those prescribed in Ordinance 1899 to 1901, in force in Hong Kong for the granting of certificates to masters of ships for the conveyance of Chinese immigrants. To use the words of the Colonial Secretary, "the Chinaman goes on board a ship provided with better comforts than emigrant ships are now compelled to provide under the regulations of the Board of Trade."

- (8.) On arrival at Durban the Superintendent, or an Inspector authorised by him, will meet the labourers with their wives and children, and make the necessary arrangements with the authorities for their conveyance to the Witwatersrand district.
- (9.) The same official will, on the arrival of the labourers at Durban, satisfy himself that they thoroughly understand all the provisions set out in their contract of service. In fact, the official will perform the same functions as the Protector on the other side. If he finds that the contract is not in order, and that after understanding the conditions and provisions the labourer is unwilling to accept them, the labourer, his wife and children, if any, will be returned to the port of embarkation at the expense of the importer.
- (10.) On reaching the Rand the labourer will be protected by members of his own and representatives of our nationality, and he will be placed in a village, location, or compound, of very considerable size and far larger than the Kimberley compounds, which have gained such a wide reputation for good all the world over.
- (11.) The sanction of the Lieut.-Governor to the transfer of the services of a labourer from one importer to another must be given in writing and only on the production of a certificate signed by the Superintendent that the agreement as to transfer has been explained to the labourer and that he consents thereto and has signed his name.
- (12.) Every employer is required to provide his labourers, their wives and children residing on his premises, with medicine and medical attendance during illness, and should he neglect to do so he may be fined, and in default of payment, imprisoned.
- (13.) Every labourer is to receive his wages monthly in the current coin of the realm. No deductions may be made by his employer except for moneys advanced before his

arrival in the Transvaal. If wages are not paid, then the Inspector or the labourer may sue for them in any competent Court.

- (14.) As to the rate of wages, the actual sum is not fixed, but it is understood that it will probably be about 30s. per month, and should the labourer elect to do piece-work, he will easily earn 50 per cent. more. Certainly the Chinaman's earnings will in no case fall below the earnings of the Kaffir. But the extra cost of recruiting, transport both ways and the elaborate food which the Chinese coolies will require bring up the actual cost of Chinese labour per month to considerably more than the cost of Kaffir labour.
- (15.) Each labourer, in the absence of any express agreement to the contrary (by mutual consent one or more days' leave may be given and taken without wages), and except in the case of sickness or of such bad health, or other good cause beyond his control, as prevents his working, will be bound to work for ten hours in every twenty-four by day or night, save on Sundays and on the days of the following Chinese festivals:—Chinese New Year, 3 days, Dragon Boat Festival, 1 day, Full Moon Festival, 1 day, Winter Solstice Festival, 1 day.
- (16.) Sundays and the Chinese festivals above-mentioned will be holidays.
- (17.) The employer will be required to provide the labourer, free of any charge, with housing, water, fuel, medical attendance, and with daily rations on the following scale: $1\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. rice, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. dried or fresh fish or meat, $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. vegetable, $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. tea, $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. nut oil, salt, or approved substitute at discretion of the Superintendent.
- (18.) The labourer is not entitled to receive wages for any day he has been absent from work, through sickness or any other cause.
- (19.) In the event of any labourer being killed or permanently injured in the course of his employment, the employer must pay compensation to the next-of-kin, or to the labourer as the case may be.
- (20.) After the labourer has served his three years, he will be sent back to China at the importer's expense.
- (21.) The labourer may not engage in skilled work of any kind.

Such are the main conditions governing the importation of Chinese labour into the Transvaal.

Conditions of Slavery.

Now I propose to set out the principal conditions which prevailed in the only system of slavery we know anything about, the slavery which was abolished by the British nation, and at the expense of the British taxpayer.

- (1.) The slave was forcibly taken from South Africa, torn from his family, marched in chains, often driven by the lash when haste was necessary, rushed on board a vessel and battened down below the decks, where many died of suffocation and hunger, until more dead than alive he made his appearance in the slave market.
- (2.) Purchased by a master, often cruel by nature, the slave was compelled to labour in all weathers, and kept to his task by means of the whip.
- (3.) No pay was given the slave; he had no rights before the law. He and his family belonged to his master to do with them as he thought fit.
- (4.) The slave's days of toil only ended with death, and any attempt at escape brought with it added torture.

These were the main conditions governing slavery, and I would ask any impartial reader if there is the slightest comparison between the position of the Chinese labourers indentured under the Transvaal Ordinance and that of the slaves who were carried off against their will to work in the plantations. There can be but one answer.

Views of the Free Churches.

Yet we find not only the Bishop of Hereford referring to the Chinese Labour Ordinance as reimposing the old conditions of slavery, but the National Free Church Council issuing a letter which begins:—"You are, of course, aware of the enormous wrong which, if the vote of the House of Commons on the 17th inst. is sustained by the silence of the country, will be inflicted on South Africa from the introduction of Chinese labourers to work the mines of the Transvaal." The chief conditions under which "this new slave trade," to quote the wording of the letter, is to be carried on are then summarised, and it is added:—"For the sake of Christ's honour and the good name of Great Britain, these proposals, in our judgment, must be confronted and frustrated by the solemn protest of the Christian Churches of this country."*

Surely, from quarters such as these one at least expected

* See *Times* report.

“charity.” By all means let us have fair criticism, like that of the Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Spencer, but misrepresentation like that of the Bishop of Hereford and the National Free Church Council deserves to be dealt with in quite another manner. Scarce wonder is it that the Witwatersrand Church Council at a meeting embracing representatives of the Baptist, Congregational, Presbyterian and Wesleyan Churches of Johannesburg and district, passed on the 5th March, by 30 votes to 1, the following resolution.

That while expressing no opinion on the economic questions involved, this meeting strongly deprecates the Free Church Council's agitation against Chinese labour, and thinks that fuller knowledge will modify the latter's views regarding the conditions of service, which are voluntary and similar to conditions which have long prevailed in South Africa.

Moreover, do not the words “inflicted upon South Africa” involve a misstatement of fact?

A Motive Disclosed.

Anything that will help to punish the Government for the Education Act appears to be considered fair game. But did not the Rev. F. B. Meyer, President of the Free Churches, rather give himself away when he explained his presence on the protest platform in Hyde Park by the statement that “when the Churches were troubled over the education question the Trades Councils stood by them, and now it was a pleasure to the Churches to pay the debt and stand by the trade unions.”* Here we have an interesting sidelight thrown on the motive, an explanation of the reason which prompted the president of the Free Churches to demonstrate against Chinese labour. Some of us were under the impression that the Free Churches had moved in this matter on different premises. Apparently that is a mistaken impression. They have moved, it would seem, to repay what they regard as a debt, and the method of payment would appear to be prompted by the Trades Councils. This question of Chinese labour is a very complex one; it is not in the least understood by the leaders of the trade unions, while the rank and file have even a smaller comprehension of the issues at stake. The responsibility which the Labour representatives have taken on themselves is very great, and their allies appear to have accepted the same responsibility on the same slender information. By all means let us have differences of opinion, religious and otherwise, but let those differences be founded on fact, and do not let us accuse one another of infringing the code of public morality without examining the particulars of the case. Above

* *Observer*, March 27.

all, do not make the accusation of slavery a return for some other service rendered. Such tactics, I submit, are unworthy of a great religious federation like that of the Free Churches.

The Rev. J. S. Moffat's * Opinion.

But what says the Rev. J. S. Moffat, a name revered in many a Nonconformist family in this country and honoured wherever missionary enterprise in South Africa is mentioned? I have the pleasure of knowing Mr. Moffat personally, and his services to the Crown have received fitting recognition. Writing in the *Contemporary Review* for March, 1901, he says:—

There are those who condemn the compound system in no measured language as slavery, as a deep machination of the tyrannical "capitalist gang" to secure a supply of labour, as an infamous and degraded bondage into which thousands of unhappy and helpless natives are forced. This is the sort of language we hear used, in some instances by men who do not know what they are talking about, in others by men influenced by motives respecting which the less said the better.

Again, is it quite fair on the white population of the Transvaal who have asked for the Chinese labour, that they should be accused of asking for what is immoral. What about the Bishop of Pretoria, the Bishop of Natal, and the thirty out of the thirty-one representatives of the Witwatersrand Church Council, all of whom have signified their approval of indentured Chinese labour! Have these men been "bribed"? Are they to be accused of advocating a system which its opponents persist in describing as immoral? They and their congregations will be the neighbours of the Chinese immigrants, not the people of this country, and why should we assume that they are content to live side by side with a foreign community, "condemned, against their will, to live under conditions of slavery, and addicted to every kind of vice and immorality." Methinks the "Christian Churches of this country" do protest too much when they hurl broadcast accusations of immorality against the Colony and against the British Government.

Indentured Indian Labour.

Indentured Indian labour has long been allowed in British Guiana. And the conditions under which it is carried on in that colony are, in every essential element, similar to the conditions under which the Government have sanctioned indentured labour in the Transvaal. Special exception has been taken to the Transvaal Ordinance on the ground that if the Chinese labourer escapes he can be punished and similar penalties await the individual who harbours him. But the same provisions are

* Son of the late Rev. Robert Moffat, D.D.

to be found in other immigration ordinances, and if I remember correctly, like conditions are, or were, inserted in contracts entered into by apprentices in this country. Nor are soldiers or sailors permitted to desert at will.

As regards the British Guiana Ordinance, which was passed in 1894, when the Opposition were in power, Mr. Lyttelton remarks* :

An Ordinance was sanctioned and put in force in which there was the obligation on the part of the coolie to reside on the plantation of the person who employed him and the obligation of working on that plantation. There is a penalty if the coolie is absent without leave ; there is the penalty of imprisonment if he deserts ; there is a penalty if anybody harbours the deserter ; and, differing from the settled policy of the Transvaal Ordinance, there is the ability on the part of the Governor of the Colony to transfer the labourer without his consent.

Either the Chinese are to be confined within certain areas and allowed only to do unskilled work, or they are to be free to go where they like and do what work they please. The British Guiana Ordinance allows the coolie to remain in the country. The Transvaal Government say the Chinese shall not be allowed to roam about the country, nor shall they be put in competition with white labour. This is really the sole point of difference between the two Ordinances. If, then, it be true that Mr. Balfour's Government are sanctioning a system of slavery in the Transvaal, it is equally true that Lord Ripon, Sir Henry Fowler, and Mr. Sydney Buxton sanctioned and approved a similar system. Remember, it was to prevent this roaming and competition that the Australian and New Zealand Governments passed their stringent Immigration Acts, and it might fairly be argued, if the Transvaal Labour Ordinance permitted Chinamen to roam as they pleased and to enter at any time into competition with white men, that such legislation was economically unsound as well as unpatriotic. Mr. Seddon and Mr. Burns would then be justified in saying that British blood had been spent only to allow the Chinaman to compete with the white man in the South African labour market. And everyone would support them.

THE ECONOMIC SIDE.

Why "Chinese" Labour?

I will now endeavour to deal with the economic side of the question. And this brings us at once to the point—the need for Chinese labour at all. It is absurd to say, as I have heard it said many times in the discussion, that the mine-owners have engineered

* House of Commons, March 21.

the whole thing, that they wanted Chinese labour all along. The whole history of the native labour problem in South Africa tells a very different tale. If the mine-owners were so keen on Chinese labour, why have they waited all this time before getting it? Long ago they were aware of the difficulty in obtaining native labour for the mines. Even under the Kruger *régime* the mines then opened had, in some years, a shortage. After the war it was hoped that new fields for recruiting would be opened up and that the supply would then be sufficient even to meet the increased demand which arose. Everything has been done that can be done to get native labour. In the opinion of all experts, native labour is the best labour; it is the cheapest, it is the labour of the country, and it needs no new regulations, nor raises any economic difficulties.

A speaker in the House of Lords the other day accused the mining corporations of substituting Chinese for native labour, because it was the cheaper labour. A closer acquaintance with the facts would have shown him, that while the average cost of native labour including wages, keep, and other incidental expenses, was 100s. per month, the cost of a Chinaman to do similar work will be more, owing to the passage-money for himself, his wife and children. Thus it is clear that it is not on the score of lessening expenses that the Chinaman is to be employed. Had the mine-owners endeavoured in any way to presume upon their strength and taken, or tried to take, advantage of the absence of any legislation in the Transvaal against the employment of Asiatic labour, their action might have been open to criticism on the ground that they had "engineered the whole thing." But, all along, the mine-owners have been guided by the desire to do what is best for the community at large and to act solely in accordance with the views of Lord Milner's Government.

Outside labour is to us no novel thing in South Africa. Some years ago the Dutch in the Cape Colony imported many thousands of Malays to assist with the unskilled work. Over 75 per cent. of the Kaffirs employed at the mines to-day are Portuguese subjects. In Natal it has been found necessary to bring in some 73,000 Indians to work in the sugar fields, and had it been possible Indian labour would probably have been selected for the Transvaal mines in preference to Chinese. But it was not possible. Owing to the continued shortage of native labour, the employment of outside labour in the Transvaal has become imperative. The Chinese are the only labourers who will do the work done by the Kaffir for the same wages; therefore, the Chinese must be brought in, or three-fourths of the mines must be abandoned as unpayable.

Native Shortage.

Before resorting to outside labour of any kind Lord Milner inaugurated a Commission to inquire into the possibility of making up the shortage from native resources. We who believe that the employment of Asiatic labour is an absolute necessity, accept the ruling of the ten commissioners who signed the majority report of that Commission—that no adequate supply of native labour exists in Central and Southern Africa to meet the requirements of the Transvaal industries. Opponents of the Transvaal policy rely on the judgment of the two commissioners who signed the minority report, and differ from their colleagues as to the native supply.

Taking the statement made by the Chamber of Mines which, so far as numbers go, appears to have been accepted by all the commissioners, the population of the territories within the scope of the Inquiry was estimated at 13,597,691. Of this total, 6,326,511 were apportioned to Southern Africa, and 7,271,180 to Central Africa. But as recruiting is prohibited in Central Africa (except as to 1000 * in British Central Africa), and also in Natal, Rhodesia and German South West Africa (except as to 1000), the population from which native workers may be drawn is reduced to 4,672,230.

Custom, however, regulates the duration of a native's working life, and, as a rule, only males between 15 and 40 years of age are willing to undertake outside employment. This limits the selection to 10 per cent. of the reduced population, to 467,223, and this number must perforce be halved as the natives do not work continuously, the average period being six months.† Thus the total *available* supply of native labour in all the districts where recruiting is freely allowed is 233,611, and adding the 2000 above mentioned this total is increased to 235,611. The immediate shortage in all industrial and agricultural operations in the Transvaal is 221,399, and the number of natives employed at the present time is 182,000.‡ There remains, therefore, a supply of only 53,611 to meet the immediate shortage, and by the finding of the Majority Report of the Labour Commission, the demand for native labour in the Transvaal mining industry alone is in excess of the present supply by about 129,000. Moreover, if all the available native labour in South Africa be absorbed by the Transvaal, the Cape and Orange River Colonies will be left without a single native labourer.

* Quite recently permission has been given to recruit a further 5000 from British Central Africa, but the importation is not to take place before August next.

† See Sir Godfrey Lagden's Report.

‡ The number of natives employed in local industries other than mines, agriculture and railways, is 69,684.

The minority commissioners bid us recruit in Uganda and British Central Africa, where they say, on what authority we are not told, the available supply is ample. Against their theories I would place the facts that in order to construct the Uganda Railway it was found necessary to import Indian coolies, and that railways are also being constructed in British Central Africa, while the tropical climate of Central Africa makes it inadvisable to tempt the natives to work in latitudes where it is often very cold. There is also another objection to the Uganda natives, sleeping sickness is very prevalent in that territory, and probably for this reason recruiting is forbidden in Uganda. So much then for the actual shortage.

Primary Cause of Scarcity.

I will now pass on to discuss the causes primarily responsible for the shortage. During the debates in Parliament members of both Houses avoided this matter, preferring to limit their comments to questions of number, wages, and death-rate. Yet it is not possible to pass a fair judgment on the policy adopted by the Transvaal Government without giving due consideration to causes which have a very direct bearing on the necessity for the introduction of outside labour. Several witnesses before the Commission gave useful evidence in this connection, and a careful perusal of that evidence shows not only the long-standing character of the trouble, but indicates beyond doubt that it is the outcome of conditions far too deeply rooted to allow of any relief being expected in the near future.

As far back as 1894 a commission sat at the Cape to inquire into the reasons governing the supply of natives available for the everyday requirements of the colony. The conclusion reached was that :

The fundamental cause of the insufficiency of supply available for farm work, and to some extent for all other work, including that of domestic servants, lies in the condition of life and population in South Africa. The mere necessities of existence are few, and obtainable with little exertion in this new sunny country.

This finding, to all intents and purpose, coincides with that of the Transvaal Labour Commission, which reports that :

The scarcity of labour is due, first and mainly, to the fact that the African native tribes are for the most part primitive, pastoral or agricultural communities, who possess exceptional facilities for the regular and full supply of their animal wants, and whose standard of economic needs is extremely low.

Native Requirements.

Notwithstanding that ten years have intervened between the publication of these two reports no material change appears to

have taken place in the conditions surrounding native life in South Africa. Nor was any material change to be expected. It is not likely, as the Transvaal Commissioners frankly admit, that a people who before the advent of Europeans lived their own life, in which industrial employment had no place, should at once acquire the needs and habits of industrial communities, and come out voluntarily to meet the labour demand which the introduction of such communities into their midst has created. Time alone will bring about a change, and then—but not till then—may we expect to see the natives flocking to the labour market. The advent of new industries will doubtless attract the Kaffirs, and when they see and understand the advantages money can obtain for them they will come forward and work. But to the conditions now existing the ordinary law of supply and demand is not applicable. The wants of the South African native are of the most primitive kind; the needs of civilised men for houses, means of communication, and other daily necessities are not the needs of the Kaffir. He is quite happy and contented as long as he has a hut to live in, sufficient food to eat, and can procure the necessary number of cattle to purchase the luxury of one wife or more. If these requirements necessitate work he is willing to work to that extent, but no further. Money and money's worth have no attractions for him. Simple-minded and naturally inactive, he prefers his own life and surroundings to those of the Europeans. I do not mean to infer that the influence of Europeans on the natives is in no way visible. In the chief towns in South Africa this is certainly the case. Accordingly there is always a fluctuating native population in the towns willing to work in certain circumstances and for certain periods. As the influx of Europeans increases this fluctuating population will increase, and gradually the natives will grow to appreciate the advantages attending a higher standard of living. But this will not be to-day or to-morrow.

Customs and Character.

Much insight was obtained by the Labour Commission as to the customs and character of the native tribes, and there is little doubt that these matters are in a great measure responsible for the scarcity of native labour in South Africa. For instance, the more warlike races regard work of any kind with aversion, some considering it degrading. We all know how the Matabele made the Mashonas their slaves, and to this day the Matabele will not work for the European. Again, special classes of labour are avoided, and few tribes have any liking for mining. The Bantus will not do underground work in any circumstances. In fact, natives for mining operations can only be obtained in any numbers

from Portuguese East Africa. Certain tribes, in addition to refusing work of any kind, are governed, as in India, by caste distinctions; thus another disturbing element is introduced into the problem of providing labour for the Transvaal industries.

Tribal Land System.

The African natives are in possession or occupation of large areas of land suitable for both agricultural and pastoral purposes. So far the European settlement has in no way affected the native possession or occupation of the soil; the natives are living under the same economic conditions as they lived under before the Europeans came into the country. And no considerable difference in their industrial habits is likely to take place until a decided modification of these conditions is brought about. The question of native labour supply is therefore intimately bound up with the tribal system of South and Central Africa. Commenting on this point the majority report of the Transvaal Commission says:

Even among the white settlers south of the Zambesi the native is not pressing upon the means of subsistence as provided by the land, except, perhaps, in the single instance of Basutoland. The scanty European agricultural population, and the facility with which a native can obtain from white owners areas for cultivation, has further tended to render him independent of wages and outside industry, while the setting apart by the various Governments of large native locations or reserves has had the same effect. Until, therefore, the progress of any native community has been sufficiently great to cause the need for money to be felt the labour surplus to be drawn from any districts must be on the whole small, and subject to heavy fluctuations, dependent, as it must be, to a large extent upon the seasons and upon the character of the crops or the pastoral wealth of the tribe.

Polygamy.

As to the practice of polygamy and the custom of purchasing wives, without taking away from what I have said as to the native desire to acquire the means of purchase and the bearing of this desire on the question of work, it does not appear from the evidence given before the Commission that polygamy is rife to any great extent. It may be, perhaps, that without the aid of the industrial market the native would not find himself in a position to buy more than one wife, but all the same, the statistics furnished by Sir Godfrey Lagden as to the Transvaal population show that only 11·65 per cent. of the natives in that colony are polygamists. This is no doubt due to the advance of civilisation, which has stopped tribal warfare and so equalised the sexes. The general conclusion of those supporting the polygamist view is that the practice affects the labour market adversely, the native refusing to work because he is supported by the industry of his wives. This argument, however, does not receive any

very material support from the witnesses, and in considering the matter it is well to remember the following resolution passed at the Bloemfontein Conference :

Except in Rhodesia the influence of polygamy upon the labour supply of South Africa is greatly exaggerated ; that polygamy is decreasing from native causes ; that the advance of civilisation has ameliorated the condition of the native women ; and that the use of the plough has relieved them largely from field labour.

Still the native wife plays a prominent part in the problem of the labour supply, since one wife will support her husband and a small family.

Native Wages and Treatment.

Minor elements in the solution of the South African labour problem are rate of wages, working conditions, and treatment by employers. It is said by some critics that if the mine-owners paid higher wages and treated the natives better they would come in. I think I have shown that if all the *available* natives were to come in the supply south of the Zambesi would not be sufficient to meet the requirements of the Transvaal industries. But setting aside the numerical difficulty no more unjust allegation has been brought against the mine-owners than the one which accuses them of allowing the natives to be badly treated and of paying them indifferent wages. Not only are the natives well paid but they are well treated. The average rate of wages for natives is 54s., and at the end of their contract each native is given a premium of £3 and a new suit of clothes as a present, if he will re-engage for a further term of serving, while in addition to their pay the natives are kept, housed, doctored, and insured against accidents, their employers paying the premium. I should like to ask the gentlemen who accuse the mining corporations of underpaying the Kaffir and treating him badly how these terms compare with the agricultural labourer in this country, who, on a slightly increased wage, has to keep himself and family and find them house-room. What, too, is the comparative position of the dock labourer with his 6d. an hour, and an average employment of three days work a week ?

Admitting, for the sake of argument, as the opponents of Chinese Labour say, that the reduction in the rate of wages immediately after the war had a prejudicial effect on the supply, the mines went back to the old tariff in February 1903. And though it was thought by some witnesses, before the Commission, that the full effect of the increase in wages had not then been attained, a full year has elapsed since wages were put back to the higher tariff, and yet the rate of supply per month has declined rather than increased. Experience shows that in South Africa,

contrary to the economic law in this country, a rise in wages, reducing as it does the term of service, diminishes supply, since the native earns his "pocket-money" for the year in a much shorter period of time. I am often asked "Why all this fuss about native labour? Before the war the mines were well supplied with native labourers. What has become of them?" As I have already explained, it is not correct to say that the mines were well supplied before the war. Sometimes, too, the aid of Mr. Kruger had to be invoked, while the labour touts would often bribe the chiefs, who found no difficulty in furnishing a contingent in these circumstances. This procedure was, however, very rightly abolished by the Chamber of Mines. Still other reasons are wanting to account for the drop from 110,000 before the war, to 70,000, the number employed on the Rand to-day. Let me give them.

Seeing the preference of the native for surface work, it may, I think, be assumed that a considerable portion of the 40,000 are employed in the new industries which have been started in the Transvaal or on the new lines of railway. Secondly the higher rate of wages doubtless plays its part in lessening the supply; and, in considering this point, it must be remembered that not only does the native get a very much higher return for his labour than he did before the war, but during the campaign the British Government paid the native 5s. a day for his services. Again, during the South African war many natives took up agriculture instead of mining as a means of livelihood, especially in Portuguese territory, where they have to pay a yearly tax, and in British territory not affected by the war, such as the Northern Transvaal. Three causes, therefore, may be said to account for this special deficiency, new industries and undertakings, agriculture and high wages.

Instead of further traversing the allegations that have been made against the treatment of the natives at the mines, it may perhaps, be more useful to give the finding of the majority report of the Labour Commission on this and kindred points. It is as follows:—

The character of the employment offered and such matters as the quality of the food and lodgings, the nature of the management and the attention paid to customs and prejudices, were dealt with, but it is difficult to gauge the exact extent of their influence on the labour supply. The attention which has been and is still being given to these details, and to such matters as compound management, health, sanitation, and treatment generally, must have, on the whole, a beneficial effect.

It is easy to exaggerate this kind of influence on supply, but the smallness of the effect is shown by the fact that agricultural employment on the farms is pursued under practically the same

conditions as obtain in the native kraals, yet farmers cannot obtain labour.

Native Sickness.

Then we are told that the natives "die like flies" at the mines, and Lord Coleridge instances a period of epidemic to support this contention. Why not go to the facts? The death-rate among the natives in the Transvaal from November 1902 to April 1903 was 57·5 per 1000 from all causes, and from sickness alone 54·5 per 1000. The statistics for the year just ending are not yet published, but I readily admit there is much sickness among the natives working in the mines, especially in the winter months, the chief disease being pneumonia.* Scurvy is also prevalent, owing principally to the emaciated and often scorbutic condition in which natives arrive at the mines. It was recently found that the high death-rate was caused entirely by the great number of deaths amongst the natives who had only been one or two months at the mines. The native often waits till he is starving before he accepts an engagement. As a natural result he is not physically fit to work on arrival, and soon succumbs if he catches cold. In order to prevent this mortality, Homes of Rest have been established at the chief recruiting stations, and here the natives are kept and fed up until they are thoroughly fit. The experiment is, I understand, working well, and it is hoped in this way to diminish considerably the sad consequences of the natives' neglect. The question of health is receiving very careful attention, and a committee of mine doctors have been investigating as to the incidence of disease amongst the natives. Their report is now in the hands of the Commissioner for Native Affairs, and the suggestions contained in that report are being acted upon.

White Unskilled Labour.

That the native supply available is not sufficient for the Transvaal requirements is clear, and for some years there is no likelihood of that supply increasing to any very great extent, although as the population grows and other African sources of supply are opened we may possibly be able to obtain from native sources all the unskilled labour wanted for the industries of the Transvaal. Till then we must call in the assistance of the Chinese. "But why," say the unemployed in this country, "why not us." And in this they but echo the words of their leaders, who, refusing to recognise the economical position in the Transvaal, are busy persuading labour of all ranks to believe that the Transvaal Government, backed up by Mr. Balfour's Government, are

* Pneumonia is very general in the Witwatersrand, and the matter is now being investigated.

desirous of ousting white labour in order to give the mining corporations the benefit of Chinese cheap labour.

Unskilled white labour in the Transvaal mines is an economic impossibility under the present conditions and cost of living. The value of the ore mined will not permit the payment of wages which must be paid to a white man in order to enable him to live; nor will the white unskilled labourer work side by side with the black labourer at the same employment. As Mr. Bryce very correctly records :—

All rough, hard work is done by natives. White men think it beneath them and only fit for blacks. The coloured man is indispensable to the white man; he is a necessary part of the economic machinery of the country, whether for mining or for manufactures, for tillage or for ranching.

The Transvaal industries have been started and built up on the basis of native labour being employed, and all public work has been undertaken on the same premises. The cost of employing, at a living wage, the British white man as an unskilled labourer, is so great that the idea, however lofty and commendable on patriotic grounds, cannot for one moment be entertained. This fact will perhaps be better appreciated when I say that the fourteen leading engineers on the Witwatersrand who drew up the statement on the gold-mining industry for Mr. Chamberlain when he visited Johannesburg, considered that 12s. a day was the lowest wage at which white men should be asked to work.

Mr. Cresswell's Experiment.

Let me give the actual figures of working a mine with white (British) unskilled labour and working a mine with black labour. Mr. Cresswell, with the consent of his proprietors, made the experiment during eighteen months of working a mine with white (British) unskilled labour. I will take two months' working at his mine (the Village Main Reef) and the same two months' working at an adjoining mine consisting of ore of the same average value (the City and Suburban), where Kaffir labour was employed for the unskilled work. In the month of September the City and Suburban crushed 16,500 tons, the profits being 22s. 1d. per ton, the Village Main Reef crushed 17,450 tons, with profits 12s. 8d. per ton. In the month of November the City and Suburban crushed 17,000 tons, yielding profits at 23s. 4d. per ton, and the Village crushed 18,045 tons, yielding profits 7s. 3d. per ton. Thus not only do we find the profits going down in the mine where white unskilled labour was employed, but the scale diminishes. The sacrifice of profits to the shareholders on Mr. Cresswell's experiment was £3000 per month; and if the same experiment had been extended to all the mines on the Rand, the loss to shareholders in one month would have been

£1,000,000, ten per cent. of which would represent a direct loss of revenue to the Transvaal Government.

These figures have been stated publicly by Sir George Farrar. I gave them at a meeting some weeks back which Mr. Cresswell attended; it was, I think, the first occasion on which they had been quoted in this country. In his reply Mr. Cresswell did not dispute their accuracy, but claimed that the value of the ore mined was different in the two cases. At least, that is what I understood from his reply. If he had said "milled" his contention would need no traversing, for the simple reason that he was obliged to forego the use of hand labour in his narrow stopes and employ machine drills. By this means in narrow stopes, he was forced to break the foot-wall and hanging-wall and send it all to the mill, thus reducing the average value of every ton of ore crushed.

"White" Kaffirs.

As against the contention that white men will do the unskilled labour required in mining on the Rand, it may here be mentioned that during the eighteen months that Mr. Cresswell was trying his experiment he had 1000 white men through his hands, and the average term of service for each man was only one month. Writing of his own experience, Colonel Weston Jarvis says:—

At the end of the Boer War in June, 1902, I was in command of 600 Yeomen, some 150 of whom wished to remain and settle in the country. I took a great deal of trouble in trying to obtain situations for them, and Lord Milner advised me to see Mr. Cresswell, the late manager of the Village Main Reef Mine, together with other mine managers, and obtain their terms for the employment of white labour for surface work on the mines. I saw Mr. Cresswell and other managers, who offered practically the same terms, namely, 5s. per day and food and lodging (which was roughly estimated at another 5s.)—total, 10s. per day; in fact, one of the managers offered 10s. a day and the men to find themselves. I put the offer before my men, explaining that if they wanted to remain in the country, and could not obtain a billet in their particular branch of industry until things became more settled, they might with advantage accept Mr. Cresswell's offer, at any rate to tide over an interregnum.

The reply I got was, "That's Kaffirs' work, sir," and although I explained that I was not driving them into it in the slightest degree, I suggested that it might be a means of livelihood rather than coming back to England and joining the ranks of the unemployed in this country. So great is the objection of the white man to do any work which might hitherto have been done by the blacks, that I only induced one of my troopers to accept the terms. About six weeks after my return to England I was driving down a country road to a railway station in Surrey when I met this one man, who had already returned, and when I asked his reasons, he said he had only served his month and then given it up, as it was Kaffirs' work. This small experience decidedly proves, to my mind, that those who claim Mr. Cresswell's honest endeavour to obtain requisite white labour for the mines to have been a total failure are absolutely correct in that assertion.*

* This letter was addressed to Mr. H. W. Lawson.

Twenty, out of about a hundred, men belonging to Lord Lovat's Scouts accepted similar work after the war, but they soon threw up their engagement; they objected to doing the work of, and being looked upon as, "white" Kaffirs.

Railway Work.

Again white unskilled labour was tried on the Springs and Ermelo, and also on the Krügersdorp lines. The imported navvies were employed on the bonus system, but only one gang is reported to have earned any bonus. In recommending that the men be sent home, the chief engineer of the railway pointed out that financially the experiment was a hopeless failure, and that if white labour were employed, the cost of railway construction would be increased by £2000 per mile, making a total loss over the 700 miles of line in contemplation of £1,400,000.

It will then, I think, be generally conceded that the experiments made with white unskilled labour, both in mining and railway work, have not proved altogether encouraging. And I scarcely think Mr. Cresswell is justified in putting forward his experiences as proof that white men can seriously be suggested as a substitute for the unskilled coloured labourer. We are not told why Mr. Cresswell's white labourers only stayed with him for a month, but I strongly incline to the opinion that, apart from their dislike to Kaffirs' work, they could not live on the wages they were earning. Advocates of cheap white labour on the Rand must therefore be classed with advocates of the "sweating system."

Foreign Whites.

I pass on to refer to the only possible white unskilled labourer—the cheap foreigner, the man who is the British workman's competitor in so many walks of industry, the man who is mainly responsible for the prevalence of "sweating." This man might perhaps be induced to go to the Transvaal and work for less than a "living wage." I do not know whether his labour would meet the requirements of the mine-owners, but I am certain that, untrammelled with restrictions as he must be, his presence as a competitor with the skilled white man in South Africa would not be welcome. Moreover, as Lord Milner said when addressing the "White League" last June:—

We are here a minority of Europeans in the midst of a vastly greater aboriginal population, and for their welfare as well as for our own it is essential that we should maintain for ourselves a certain standard of civilisation. One of the worst misfortunes that could happen to the Transvaal would be to deliberately create a class of mean whites there. Yet this must inevitably result from employing cheap foreign labour at a very low wage, and so bringing him below the level of the Kaffir,

I claim now to have shown that white unskilled labour is impossible, so far as the British white man goes, and politically as well as economically undesirable so far as concerns the foreign white man.

The Truth Withheld.

It is difficult to imagine how the "Party of progress," as the Radicals were once called, can lend themselves to support so retrograde a step as that involved in the policy they are seriously advocating. Fancy a British white man putting himself on an equality with the black. Is this what free education and teaching of the technical schools has come to? Is this to be the goal of trade unionism? Why, too, should an Englishman spend his little all in emigrating to South Africa to earn wages which for the black are double what his requirements need, but for the white would in no way equal what he can earn at home? And this in a country where the cost of living for a man, wife, and three children is about £24 per month. To pay the unskilled white man four times the wage of the black man would be impossible on the basis of mining operations in the Transvaal, and on the basis accepted by the public when the Transvaal Government increased its obligations. Why keep these facts from the working man? Why not tell him that every eight additional unskilled coloured men working in the mines means employment for another skilled white man at a rate of wages which will enable him to bring out to South Africa his wife and children and make a new home for them? Mr. Will Crooks* declaimed with heat in the House of Commons that "the mine-owners know that directly they get the Chinese they will be able to do without the white men." What he should have said was that the employment of fifty thousand Chinese will give extra employment for over eight thousand more skilled whites, while that if no Chinese be brought over and the mines have to close down, at least eight thousand skilled white men will be thrown out of work and come upon the overcrowded labour market at home.

Trade Unions.

Without conforming to that part of the resolution recently passed by the General Federation of Trade Unions which declares "the social and economic progress of all countries" to be based on the principles of trade unionism, I frankly admit that the position held to-day by the working classes in this country is mainly due to the power of the unions. But so formidable a weapon as trade unionism needs very careful handling. The passing from power to tyranny is easy of accomplishment,

* Member of Parliament for Woolwich.

and more than once leaders of labour have very nearly overstepped the barrier. Nor have the consequences of their indiscretion always fallen on themselves or their opponents; in many instances the rank and file have suffered from the failure of their leaders to appreciate the circumstances or gauge the position. So it is in the case of Chinese labour. There is great fear that the want of knowledge of the labour leader may cause him to bring discredit on trade unionism and do harm to the true interests of the British working man. Nothing so injures a cause as an attack based on incorrect premises, and the wording of the resolution I have referred to cannot but tell against the success of the campaign the unions have inaugurated.

Other Immigrations.

No such outcry was heard against the immigration of indentured Indian labour in British Guiana, where the conditions of engagement, as I have explained, differ in no essential element to the conditions under which the Chinese labourers will work in the Transvaal. The Kanakas came and went in Queensland unnoticed by the trade unions of this country. And yet the Queensland Ordinance provided that the indentured Kanakas should be confined to certain kinds of agriculture; while in an amending Act the Queensland Government expressly forbade numerous other employments, and enacted that the indentured Kanaka should be repatriated unless he was re-indentured. Moreover, no movement has ever been inaugurated against the employment of Kaffirs; it has not been demanded that their place shall be taken by white men. Again, no attempt has been made on the part of trade unionists here to interfere with the labour in the Malay Peninsula States, and yet many thousands of Chinamen are drafted every year into this portion of the Empire to assist in its development. Why, then, this sudden attack by trade unions on the Transvaal Government?

Labour M.P.'s Allegations.

In my dilemma I am obliged to go for an explanation to the speeches of the Labour representatives in the House of Commons. But here I find no reference to any infringement of the "principles of trade unionism," the main objections raised being that the indentured labour is Chinese, which is the personification of all that is evil, and that the deficiency caused by the scarcity of native labour should be filled not by Chinese but by white unskilled labour from this country. To these objections are added the further statements that the conditions of the ordinance mean the reintroduction of slavery, and that plenty of native labour will be forthcoming if the mining corporations gave better treatment and

higher wages to the Kaffir, thereby implying that the natives are now being badly treated and are insufficiently remunerated for their services. All these allegations I claim to have combated by fact and argument.

The economic and business side of the matter is altogether ignored; no attempt is made to tell the working men of this country why white unskilled labour cannot be employed on the Rand, or that full employment of coloured unskilled labour means the further engagement of white skilled labour. The alternative to employing Chinese, namely, the bankruptcy of the new colonies and the transfer of their liabilities to the taxpayers at home, is carefully suppressed, or alluded to in a manner as if it were a question concerning only a few mining magnates, instead of directly affecting millions of people who have investments in the mines and indirectly the whole population of Great Britain. Nor do I find any reference to the fact that the rating assessment of the mines brings into the Transvaal exchequer seven-eighths of the revenue. And this brings me to the question of the Transvaal liabilities.

Transvaal Obligations.

Neither speakers nor audiences in this country seem quite to realise the extent of the Transvaal obligations. The Transvaal stands committed to a very heavy public expenditure, and unless mine-owners, representing as they do the chief, one might almost say the only, established industry in the colony, are in a position to take their share of these obligations, the Transvaal Government must of necessity make default, and payment will have to be made by the taxpayer at home. Let me give the figures. First we have the Transvaal Loan, guaranteed by the Imperial Government—£35,000,000, of which only £30,000,000 has so far been issued. Then there is the War Loan, one-third under-written by the great mining houses—£30,000,000. And thirdly, the Johannesburg Municipal Loan, one half raised, one half committed to, in all £3,000,000, a total capital liability of £63,000,000. This means that, supposing no further liabilities be undertaken, the colony must collect a revenue to meet the interest on £63,000,000. Even now its annual expenditure is over £6,000,000, as against £4,000,000 before the war. And if this cannot be raised then the colony will only be able to carry on with the assistance of the Imperial Treasury. No wonder Labour leaders avoid any reference to this vital fact, seeing that what are commonly described as the working classes pay no income tax at all. But men who have made great financial sacrifices to pay for the war, and are still suffering from that sacrifice have a right to demand a hearing, and to refuse their sanction to the abandon-

ment of the only policy that can avoid ruin to the Transvaal, ruin to South Africa, and the absolute waste of all the blood and treasure expended to obtain the supremacy of the British flag south of the Zambesi.

Opinion in Transvaal.

Addressing a meeting the other day I was interrupted by a man in the audience who exclaimed, "But the people of the Transvaal don't want Chinese Labour." This view has also been expressed in both Houses of Parliament. To critics of this kind I would point to the fact that Lord Milner has told us that, in his opinion, the vote in the Legislative Council faithfully reflects public opinion in the colony. At first, when the question was but little understood, public opinion in the Transvaal was undoubtedly against Chinese Labour. But all that is changed now. The people in the Transvaal have grasped the position. Let us hope the opponents of Chinese Labour in this country will soon follow suit.

Here is an extract from Lord Milner's latest telegraphic despatch on the subject :—

As far as European community on Rand is concerned opinion is practically unanimous. With the exception of certain trade societies, who have little influence even with the working man there, there is no one left to oppose Asiatic Labour. You have in favour of it the municipalities, the Chamber of Commerce, converted from a majority of 51 to 5 against to a majority of 51 to 11 for, the great body of white miners, the whole professional class, the four Christian Churches and a unanimous Press.*

When Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman moved his vote of censure, he was unable to quote a single authoritative voice from the Transvaal in opposition to the Ordinance. And except the small meeting at some remote place in the colony, since the question of Chinese labour became a burning one and came before the British Parliament, I have the Colonial Secretary's authority† for the statement, there has not been a single representative meeting or a petition against the proposals of the Transvaal Government. The only direct expression of hostile opinion was the cable from General Botha signed by himself on his own behalf and on behalf of a few other Dutch leaders, and this message was not sent until after surprise had been expressed in the House of Lords at the non-existence of any counter-petition. We know full well what General Botha wants to see. His views correspond with those of the Boers who signed the letter addressed to the Chairman and Members of the Labour Commission requesting "that the Squatters Act may be put into operation, and that such restrictions may be laid down that

* Received at the Colonial Office March 20.

† Mr. Lyttelton at Stratford, April 13.

locations may be broken up, so that in consequence thereof, the native shall be compelled to work instead of living an idle life on private farms and Crown lands." This has always been the view of a certain section of the Dutch, and if the matter rested with them there is little doubt that they would soon find a way of forcing the natives to work. But no British Government would sanction a policy which involves the very first principle of slavery—compulsion.

Why not a Referendum?

A specious demand is being made for a referendum, and in this Mr. Deakin, the late Commonwealth premier, joins, although, it should be said, he had not seen Lord Milner's despatch when he made his speech. But a referendum requires a registration of all voters in the colony, and immediate relief is required. Why, too, waste time and money, and further imperil the industries of the Transvaal? Have we not a petition in favour of Chinese labour signed by 45,000 white adult males, of whom 10,000 were Dutchmen? Let us see what this represents. The most reliable estimate gives 85,000 as the total white adult male population (British and Dutch) of the Transvaal. From this number we must deduct the 15,000 Government officials, whose opinion was very properly not sought, leaving a population of 70,000 adult males, of whom 45,000 signed the petition; in other words, 64 per cent. of the male adults (British and Dutch) in the colony have expressed their opinion. Before the petition was presented to the Transvaal Government, it was very carefully scrutinised, and each canvasser who obtained signatures was obliged to make an affidavit that every signature on his list was genuine. One can understand then the feeling of indignation which prevailed in the Transvaal when it became known that doubt was expressed in certain quarters here as to the *bona fides* of the petitioners. So acute, indeed, was the feeling, that a deputation, consisting of elected representatives from all the mining labourers, commercial and professional bodies, met Lord Milner and expressed their views on the attitude of the Opposition in no measured terms.

Even if a referendum were taken it is doubtful whether more than 64 per cent. would record their votes. At the recent Cape elections only 62 per cent. of the electors voted, including natives, notwithstanding that the issue at stake was the putting of the Bond or Progressives into power. And at the election of a municipal council for Johannesburg, only 39 per cent. of the electorate recorded their votes. Mr. Deakin will also remember that in Australia when the referendum was taken on the Federation Question the returns showed that a considerable portion of

the electors did not vote at all. I venture to think there can be little doubt about the opinion in the Transvaal as to the question of Chinese labour.

Mining Profits in the Transvaal.

In connection with the agitation, so skilfully engineered by the Opposition wire-pullers, I was asked by an opponent to give some details of mining profits. "Look, for example," he said, "at the Crown Reef Gold Mine—why, the last dividend was declared at 90 per cent." That may be, but it is 90 per cent. on the value at which the shares were issued; it is only, I think, about 6 per cent. on the value they stand at to-day, which is not a great return for money invested for a short term of years at the end of which the principal is gone. In most instances the present owners of the mines—who are the shareholders, not the few individuals who first purchased the property, but men and women of every nationality scattered all over the world—secured their holdings somewhere about the present market-price. Surely it is not seriously contended by business people that these owners have no right to receive a modest rate of interest for their investment. The position is on all fours with house property, say in the City of London. A purchaser to-day has to pay the market-price, and take a small return by way of interest for his money. But I have never heard of any public outcry being raised at the enhanced value of property, much less do we find members of parliament getting up in their places and exclaiming with vehemence that someone, he does not exactly know who, is getting 1000 per cent. out of the transaction!

My opponent confessed that he had never looked at the matter in that light. "Ah, but," said he as if a bright new thought had struck him, "in Australia the gold mines are worked with white labour and they pay good dividends," a remark which only accentuated the small acquaintance he had with the real economic position of the Transvaal gold industry. "Agreed," I rejoined; "but the Australian mines yield ore valued at, roughly, £4 per ton, whereas a very large number of mines on the Rand only yield ore to the value of 25s. per ton, a certain number give ore valued at 35s., and only thirteen mines, I think, are now producing an ore valued as high as 50s. per ton—a very different condition of things to that prevailing in Australia. And I might add that if these mines were in Australia instead of the Transvaal, they would never have been worked at all.

The cost of producing and milling per ton of ore has averaged 30s. 5d. per ton throughout the Transvaal, and the average amount of gold yielded for each ton of ore milled is 41s. per ton, so that even with sufficient native labour the net profit has been less

than 10s. per ton. And to increase that cost, by employing white unskilled labour at a wage of 12s. a day, would add 10s. 1d. to the cost of production and milling and thus render gold-mining unprofitable.

Of the seventy-nine companies crushing before the war the following is the yield per ton of ore crushed, taken from the State mining engineer's report:—

Number of Companies.					Yield per ton.
13	.	.	.	.	under 25s.
12	.	.	.	.	under 30s.
12	.	.	.	.	under 35s.
11	.	.	.	.	under 40s.
19	.	.	.	.	over 40s.
12	.	.	.	.	over 50s.
79					

It will be seen from the above figures that with white labour only thirty-one mines could meet their cost of production. And, as I have already stated, seven-eighths of the revenue of the Transvaal is derived from the mining industry, if this huge machine stops financial ruin awaits not only the Transvaal but the whole of South Africa.

THE IMPERIAL SIDE.

Development.

Finally there is the Imperial side to consider. We have great responsibilities before us. We have annexed new territory rich in minerals and in agricultural prospects. Surely what we have to do is to develop the Transvaal industries and so get back by trade what we have spent on the war. In this way we shall soon see a white population grow up in the new Colonies which will be a British population. And by this means alone can we hope to keep the new Colonies a British possession and maintain the natives in their proper position. An American once said to me: "You Britishers are a singular race; you spend millions of pounds in acquiring new territory rich in mineral wealth, but you never develop it. Look at Australia. Look at Canada. And now look at South Africa." If we had made it our business to develop our Colonial Empire we should to-day have no need to discuss Protection or Preference. We should be able to dictate our own terms all round. Let us take warning by the past. To allow the minerals to stay in the earth of South Africa for another century, as some would have us do, is a policy unworthy of a business nation, detrimental to the Empire, and one which must inevitably

weaken, if it does not destroy, British supremacy south of the Zambesi.

Stagnation.

"You want to work out the mines too fast," is a favourite criticism of certain gentlemen who desire to be regarded as the only friends of the working man. The allegation has not been widely traversed, probably because of its obvious absurdity, but it is so dangerous and so pernicious that I feel bound to deal with it. A very elementary knowledge of finance is sufficient to explain that when a mine is started on the basis of being worked out in ten years, and everything in connection with that mine is arranged on the same premises, it would be absolutely dishonest to take twenty years to work out the mine, paying shareholders half dividends the while. To critics of this class it appears a matter of comparative indifference whether the shareholders' property is lowered in value 50 per cent. so long as an object lesson in the limitation of output can be enforced. They forget, however, that if you limit in this way the output of gold, you deliberately cause the greater number of the mines to close down. "So much the better," they will probably say. But I would remind them that not only do you ruin the shareholder, but you disperse existing white labour, and prevent the employment of further white labour.

In short, you upset all the machinery for developing the new colonies; you cause railway work to stop, for even supposing the necessary amount of native labour were obtainable, there would be no funds available to pay for the construction. Agriculture would also be at a standstill, for as the white population grew less and less, it would be useless to till the land or rear cattle. Good markets would be gone, probably never to return. For myself I confess I am at a loss to see how any politician is justified in preaching what he knows will ruin the prosperity of a colony for the mere purpose of making party capital. And I am still further at a loss to see how any labour leader can advocate a policy which means displacing his fellow men, and ousting them from their natural birthright.

It is idle to say to the Transvaal, "You are producing fourteen million pounds' worth of gold a year. Be content and go slow, although nearly half of your machinery is lying idle." As Mr. Duncan reminds us, what would Lancashire reply if we were to say, "Bad as things are, you are making, say, fifty million pounds' worth of cotton goods to-day. Be content with that and go slow?" That attitude is the very worst to take in any industry. See what it means for the Transvaal. In 1899 when the mines produced gold at the rate of £20,000,000 per

annum, £24,000 was expended locally day by day in wages and supplies. Now only £16,000 is expended in this manner. And yet the white population of the Transvaal, which looks almost entirely to the gold industry for its very existence, is much larger than it was before the war.

Which Will You Have?

Look at the trade of South Africa with the mother country to-day. What will that trade become in ten years' time with the mines in full working? Lord Milner has pledged his word that for every ten-thousand coloured labourers introduced on the Rand the same number of whites—men, women, and children—will be added to the population. Multiply this number twenty times and you have not reached the figure of the white population of the Transvaal when the industries are in full process of development. Think what this added population means to the trade of South Africa—to the trade of the Motherland. At the present time, some three thousand stamps on the Rand are standing idle. If those were at work they would alone give employment to six thousand additional skilled white men. It is estimated that in five years' time, eight thousand stamps might easily be added to the existing supply, even supposing all now erected were working. As each stamp involves the importation of £1600 worth of machinery, the addition of eight thousand stamps would give £12,800,000* additional trade to this country in machinery. Further, every stamp at work means the purchase of British material in order to enable it to perform its functions to the extent of £330 per annum, or an aggregate of £5,500,000 a year, in addition to the sum already mentioned. These few points may perhaps help to show the opponents to Chinese labour how mistaken they are in refusing to consider the Imperial side of the question.

Mr. Seddon's Mistake.

Greater Britain possesses no statesman more imperial in his ideas and sentiments than Mr. Seddon. And perhaps I shall not be far wrong if I say that no Premier more jealously resents outside interference in the domestic matters of his colony than the deservedly popular head of the New Zealand Government. It is therefore with no little surprise that I read the announcement that Mr. Seddon had issued invitations to the premiers of other oversea colonies, asking them to unite with him in sending a protest to the Imperial Government against the employment of Chinese labour in the Rand mines. Self-govern-

* And this on a preferential tariff.

ment confers on a colony the absolute right to conduct its own affairs in such a way as the local Parliament may deem fit, subject alone to the Royal veto, in the event of legislation being passed conflicting with imperial engagements or contravening the principles of International Law. But the privileges of self-government in no way give permission to interfere in the domestic concerns of another colony, be that colony self-governing or administered directly by the Crown. In accordance with the promise made after the war that as soon as the Transvaal was ripe for self-government that position should be conferred on the Colony, it has ever been the aim of the Imperial Government—and this aim has received the support of both political parties—to give Lord Milner and his council as free a hand as possible in the administration of local affairs. Moreover, when the question was raised at Westminster last session as to the introduction of Chinese labour into the Transvaal, Mr. Chamberlain made the pertinent statement that the issue would be left to the Colony itself to decide, and it may, I think, be assumed that the late Colonial Secretary was but acting as the mouthpiece of the Cabinet.

On the other hand, Mr. Lyttelton has made it clear that he fully recognises the title of all the self-governing colonies to express their opinion on so important a question as the introduction of Chinese labour into the Transvaal. But he adds:—

His Majesty's Government have declared that their policy is to treat the Transvaal as though it were a self-governing colony, unless a distinct Imperial interest is concerned, and to interfere as little as possible with local opinion and local wishes. This policy has many reasons to support it, but, among others, it is based on the conviction that each of the States of the Empire, by reason of its direct interests and special knowledge of the conditions affecting it, is best able to deal with its own problems, and it is this conviction which has guided his Majesty's Government in its action in regard to the question of alien races in New Zealand and Australia. It must not be forgotten that there is much that is abnormal in the economic condition of the Transvaal which may call for abnormal measures, and his Majesty's Government, consistently with the policy which they have laid down, could not refuse to accede to the wishes of one part of the Empire on a matter which it regarded as of paramount importance to its well-being in deference to representations from another part of the Empire not directly interested.

Another Misconception.

Mr. Seddon seems also to be under the impression that the question of Chinese labour is one which only interests "Rand mine-owners and speculators." A little consideration should enable him to see that here, too, he is mistaken. The agriculturists, both British and Dutch, in the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony are extremely anxious to secure more native labour. In some districts the supply is lamentably deficient, but as soon as

recruiting for the mines is relaxed recruiting for the farmers can begin. This aspect of the position was, doubtless, present to the minds of the Dutch members of the Legislative Council, who all voted in favour of the importation of Chinese for the mines. Again, "speculators" is hardly the correct term to apply *en bloc* to the thousands of shareholders in the Rand mines. Many people have invested money in Rand mines who cannot by any stretch of the imagination be called "speculators." The shareholders in the Rand mines include all classes of individuals.

The long-felt scarcity of gold, caused in no small measure by the continued limited output from the Transvaal, is telling adversely on every kind of security. Even gilt-edged securities have fallen for the same reason from their high position, and indirectly the same effect is felt on all colonial stock. And the depression is felt not alone by the British Empire. It is the same everywhere. In delivering his budget the French Finance Minister ascribed the depreciation in the world's markets to the stagnation of the Transvaal mines. "So long," he said, "as these mines are not fully worked, the morbid condition in the world's markets will continue."

Mr. Seddon, if he will allow me to say so, hardly seems to have thought the matter out. And I greatly fear that the immediate cause of so sudden a departure from the customary etiquette of colonial diplomacy is due to unexpected pressure from the Labour party in New Zealand acting on the knowledge that the Premier has always taken a strong line against Asiatic immigration into his own colony. Be the immediate cause, however, what it may, no one can question that Mr. Seddon is actuated by the highest motives, and, whatever may be the outcome of his indiscretion, I feel assured that the idea of a protest was conceived in the best interests of the Empire. Taken in conjunction with his past attitude towards Asiatic immigration one is led to infer that Mr. Seddon's object is to maintain in all colonies, as far as possible, a continuity of policy respecting the placing of restrictive conditions on the introduction of unskilled Asiatics into white communities. And in this he will find himself generally supported. But unfortunately in the present instance he does not appear to have sufficiently diagnosed the case with which he is so anxious to deal.

Australia, Canada, Natal, and the Cape.

The late Commonwealth Premier, Mr. Deakin, was in a somewhat similar position to that of Mr. Seddon, and, like the New Zealand Premier, he has always taken the lead in excluding the Chinese from Australia. Moreover, he is in full accord with Sir Edmund Barton as to the expulsion of the Kanakas and the

giving of mail contracts to those companies who only employ white labour on their ships. Having thus taken so prominent a part in upholding what is generally known as the "White Australia Policy," he could hardly refuse to join Mr. Seddon in his protest, added to which, with an increased Labour Vote in the Federal Parliament, his course was, to a certain extent, dictated. Canada, on the other hand, declined to follow Mr. Seddon's lead, and refused to join in the protest. The same line was taken by Natal. The Cape alone in South Africa came to Mr. Seddon's aid. But, as Lord Milner has shown, this was only done to meet the exigencies of a General Election, an opinion which the present attitude of Dr. Jameson's Government towards the Transvaal Labour Ordinance fully bears out.

Bond Sympathy.

In South Africa the Bond influence is reckoned with at its true value. Here, however, it is different. Hence we find the same politicians who ranged themselves on the side of the Boers in the late war ready to act again in concert with the Bond over the Chinese labour question, and their views meeting with serious attention. For party purposes the Bond is now opposing the introduction of the Chinese into the Transvaal, though on previous occasions, when Mr. Kruger was in power at Pretoria, it did not hesitate to take a directly opposite line in respect to the Cape Colony. As Sir Richard Solomon* has told us the Bond party when in power at the Cape passed two resolutions in favour of importing Chinese labour, and the matter only fell through on the ground of expense. So much then for the value of the Cape protest.

The Bond still believes in the ascendancy of the Dutch in South Africa. For this aim it lives, moves, and has its being. The members know the financial straits of the new colonies and that unless the mines are worked at full speed financial bankruptcy confronts the Transvaal. This is what the Bond desires to see, and I do not think I should be far wrong if I said that the pro-Boers at home would also like to see, not, perhaps, for the same reasons, but because in their opinion such a calamity would prove their views about the war to be correct. Should any reader question my ground for making this observation he will find that it is based upon the speeches of certain opponents of Chinese labour in both Houses of Parliament. The Bond is working hard to stir up public opinion everywhere against the introduction of Chinese indentured labour into the Transvaal, and

* Legal Adviser to the Transvaal Administration. Formerly member of the Legislative Assembly in the Cape Colony, and Attorney-General in Mr. Schreiner's Ministry.

naturally members rejoice to find that they can count on such valuable allies as the Opposition in this country, and the Labour Party in both hemispheres.

The Chinese Government.

I have heard a great deal about the supposed intervention of the Chinese Government. And this has been used in a sense hostile to the Transvaal Labour Ordinance. Let me record the facts. It will be remembered that at the time of making the treaty between China and Great Britain, generally known as the 'Treaty of Peking' sanctioning the emigration of Chinese coolies to British colonies for labour purposes, it was agreed that general regulations governing the emigration were to be formulated by the Chinese authorities. Many years have passed since then, but the Chinese Government have never thought it necessary to draw up these regulations, with the result that Chinese coolies have been annually imported into the Malay States and elsewhere within the Empire by means of special arrangements governing particular migrations. And but for the singular tactics of the Opposition and the Labour leaders it may, I think, be assumed that the Chinese Government would not have further intervened in the matter of the Transvaal Ordinance than to satisfy themselves in the ordinary way that the provisions of the Ordinance were satisfactory.

When, however, men of weight in the House of Commons accuse a friendly Government of allowing its subjects to enter into an employment which these gentlemen are pleased to call "slavery," it is not to be wondered at that the Chinese authorities should resent the accusation. And one can hardly find fault with them for desiring to arrange future migrations in such a way as to prevent any repetition of these tactics. The Chinese Government are quite prepared to let the coolies go, and having secured what they consider necessary amendments to the Ordinance they are equally satisfied with the enactment; but in view of the reckless talking in the House of Commons and the fruits of the debates in Parliament the authorities in Peking propose to take advantage of their diplomatic privileges and make regulations which will apply to all cases of a similar kind. Obviously this will take a little time, and the consequences of these regulations may be far-reaching, as they will doubtless apply to the coolies in the Malay States as well as to the coolies in the Transvaal. Not for the first time have the insular prejudices of politicians at Westminster handicapped progress in a British colony, and but for the courage and exceptional ability displayed by Mr. Lyttelton we might have had a repetition of past errors.

Opinion in China.

Very encouraging to the Transvaal Government is the reception given to the Ordinance in North China, whence it is expected the majority of the labourers will come. The collieries of the Northern Provinces afford the best recruiting area for similar work on the Rand, and owing to the outbreak of hostilities between Russia and Japan the annual migration of labourers cannot take place. So it would seem that the offer of work in the Transvaal has come at a most opportune time. A telegraphic despatch from the *Times* correspondent * at Peking, after stating that the terms of the contract have been published in the English and Chinese languages, tells us that the information has been widely distributed and widely read, and that the conditions have received general approval. Going more into detail, the correspondent adds, that as regards wages, hours of labour, non-working days, housing, food, medical attendance, overtime payments and piecework payments, the conditions are considered "superior to any similar terms ever known in China, and certain to attract the best labour available." Referring to the characteristics of these North China labourers he points out that :

They are a fine class of men, temperate, frugal, well conducted, and practically all married, many of whom have already worked under British and American engineers. Returning after three years' absence in a British colony, the experienced miners will be able to render service in the future, when the vast undeveloped mines of China shall be opened.

This should prove instructive, if somewhat embarrassing, reading to those gentlemen who have been at such pains to convince the country that the British Government and the Transvaal Government were conspiring together to establish a system of slavery in the new colony. I commend these facts to the notice of Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman and his colleagues, who have not hesitated to impeach Mr. Balfour's Government, and to bring a grave charge against the entire unionist party without the slightest evidence to support their allegations.

A Policy of Expediency.

No more unjust objection has been launched at the Transvaal Labour Ordinance than that which implies that the policy is a permanent policy, and that the native will gradually give way to the Chinaman, who will become a permanency at the mines. The policy of Lord Milner and the British Government in respect to Chinese labour is not a permanent policy; it is a policy of expediency. The importation of Chinese will not, as I have

* Dated April 7th.

explained, be an inexpensive experiment, and it is doubtful whether a Chinaman will prove a better miner than the Kaffir. It may be taken for granted that if and when a sufficient supply of natives is forthcoming the importation of Chinese coolies will cease. Meanwhile the mines will take all the Kaffirs who will come. The introduction of Chinese labour is only the last resource. All other means have been tried and failed. A crisis has arrived; the position is akin to a young man in the vigour of life suddenly stricken down with a severe illness; an immediate operation is the only way life can be prolonged. Will his parents refuse to allow the operation? The Transvaal Government are in a similar dilemma. They have consulted all physicians. No hope is held out to them. There is but one remedy—Chinese labour. The case is desperate. The life of the colony, of the whole of South Africa, depended on the consent of the British Parliament. How could it be withheld?

Had we a less powerful Government in office or a less strong Colonial Secretary it is possible such an Imperial calamity might have happened. Then the Boers and Afrikaners would have taken the matter into their own hands and made the Kaffirs work. Englishmen would never stand this, and the fat would have been in the fire again. With the Home and the Transvaal Governments at loggerheads, the new colonies bankrupt, Boers, and Afrikaners dissatisfied, and South Africa in the throes of a native rebellion, the situation would be worse than before the war. But the danger stops not with the natives. The white men who have made South Africa what it is to-day, and who have made their homes south of the Zambesi, would themselves rise against the Power which sought to rule them to their own disadvantage. It would be the American colonies over again, a white rebellion, the British flag hauled down, and in its place that of the United States of South Africa, Mr. Kruger's ambition realised.

But what about the British taxpayers and the two hundred and fifty millions spent, to say nothing of the lives sacrificed, in establishing Imperial supremacy in South Africa? Was all this to go for naught at the bidding of the Opposition? The country, through its Parliament, has rightly answered No.

C. KINLOCH COOKE.

3 MOUNT STREET, W.

April 25, 1904.

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